

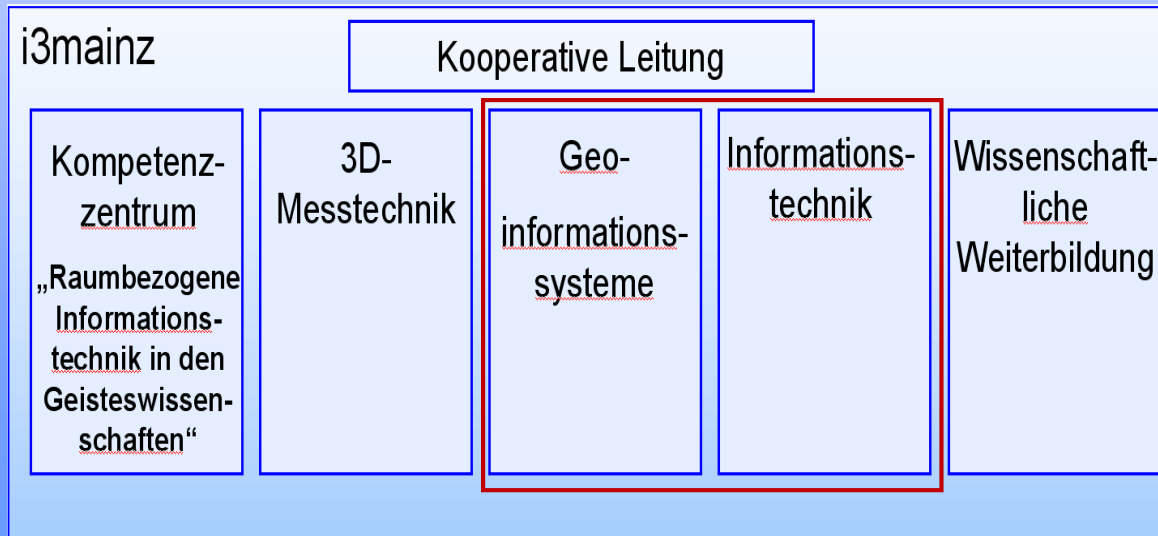
# **Worauf Gutachter achten – Erfahrungen aus der Antragsvaluierung und Gutachtertätigkeit für die Europäische Kommission**

**Klaus Böhm**

*i3mainz, Institut für Raumbezogene Informations- und Messtechnik  
Fachbereich Technik - Geoinformatik und Vermessung  
Fachhochschule Mainz  
Holzstraße 36  
55116 Mainz*

# Persönliches

- CV
  - 2004-2005 Visiting Professor UNO
  - Seit 1998 Professor für Geoinformatik an der FH-Mainz
  - 1995 – 98 Abteilungsleiter ZGDV
  - 1991 – 95 Wissenschaftlicher Mitarbeiter ZGDV
  - 1998 Gründung KMU health&media



20 wissenschaftliche  
Vollzeitmitarbeiter

## Persönliches

- EU Erfahrung
  - Projekt Partner und Koordinator FP4
  - Evaluator seit 1999 im 5, 6 und 7 FP
  - Reviewer im 5. und 6. FP
  - Bereiche:
    - ICT (eGov, Technology Enhanced Learning)
    - Research (Researchers Night, EraMore)

# Inhalt

- Hintergrundinformation
- Organisation und Ablauf im Überblick
- Im Detail
  - *Individual Reading*
  - *Consensus*
  - *Pannel*
- Feedback von Evaluatoren
- Eigene Erfahrungen

## Hintergrundinformation

- Funding decisions are based on peer review of research proposals
- High quality evaluators are at the core of the system
  - Of course only those who have not submitted a proposal
- Over 50,000 registered in the database by the end of FP6
- Between 4500 to 5000 independent experts engaged every year
- About 16,000 proposals evaluated annually

## Hintergrundinformation

### *Expert selection*

- Based on:
  - **A high level of expertise**
  - **An appropriate range of competences**
- If the above conditions can be satisfied, then also:
  - **Balance academic/industrial**
  - **Gender**
  - **Geography**
  - **Rotation**
- But also, of course, constrained by:
  - **availability**
  - **avoidance of conflicts of interest**
  - **uncertainty over number and exact coverage of proposals**

# Hintergrundinformation

## Einige Fakten vom 1. Call in ICT Themes

Evaluators	Male	Female
947	752	195

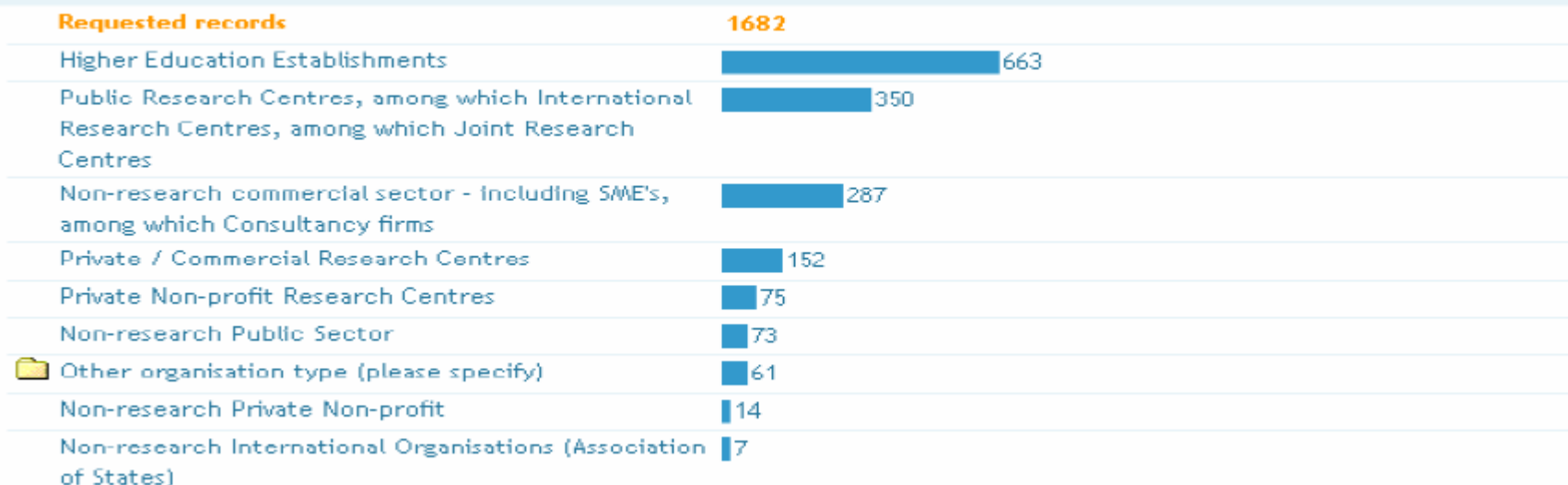
Age in Years	Number of Experts
25 - 29 yrs	2
30 - 34 yrs	45
35 - 39 yrs	112
40 - 44 yrs	216
45 - 49 yrs	178
50 - 54 yrs	147
55 - 59 yrs	108
60 - 64 yrs	88
65 - 69 yrs	38
70 - 74 yrs	12
Others	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>947</b>

Organisation Type Name	Status	Number of Experts
Consultancy firms	BCO	67
Higher Education Establishments	HES	402
International Research Centres	RIO	5
Joint Research Centre	JRC	3
Non-research Commercial sector including SMEs	BES	127
Non-research International Organisations (Association of States)	INO	8
Non-research Private Non-profit	PNP	2
Non-research Public Sector	PUS	29
Others	OTH	77
Private / Commercial Research Centres	RPR	101
Private Non-profit Research Centres	RPN	37
Public Research Centres	RPU	88
<b>Total</b>		<b>946</b>

# Hintergrundinformation

Survey among evaluators (Oct. 2007 – Nov. 2008)

What is your current or most recent organization type? -single choice reply- (compulsory)



What is your gender? -single choice reply- (optional)



# Hintergrundinformation

## Survey among evaluators (Oct. 2007 – Nov. 2008)

What is your age group? -single choice reply- (compulsory)

**Requested records**

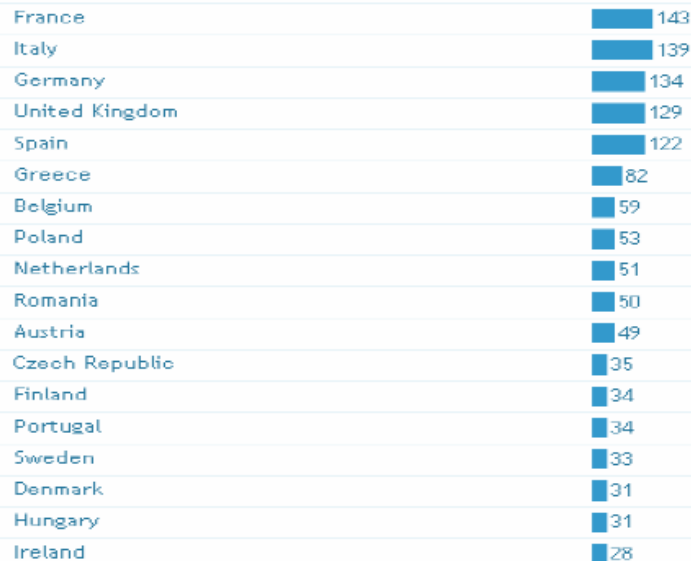
**1682**



EU Member States -single choice reply- (optional)

**Requested records**

**1477**



## **Hintergrundinformation**

### ***Conflicts of interest***

- **Disqualifying COI**
  - **Involved in preparation of proposal**
  - **Stands to benefit directly**
  - **Close family relationship**
  - **Director/trustee/partner**
  - **Employee**
  - **Member of Advisory Group**
  - **Any other situation that compromises impartiality**
- **Potential COI**
  - **Employed in last 3 years**
  - **Involved in research collaboration in previous 3 years**
  - **Any other situation that casts doubt...or that could reasonably appear to do so...**

## Hintergrundinformation

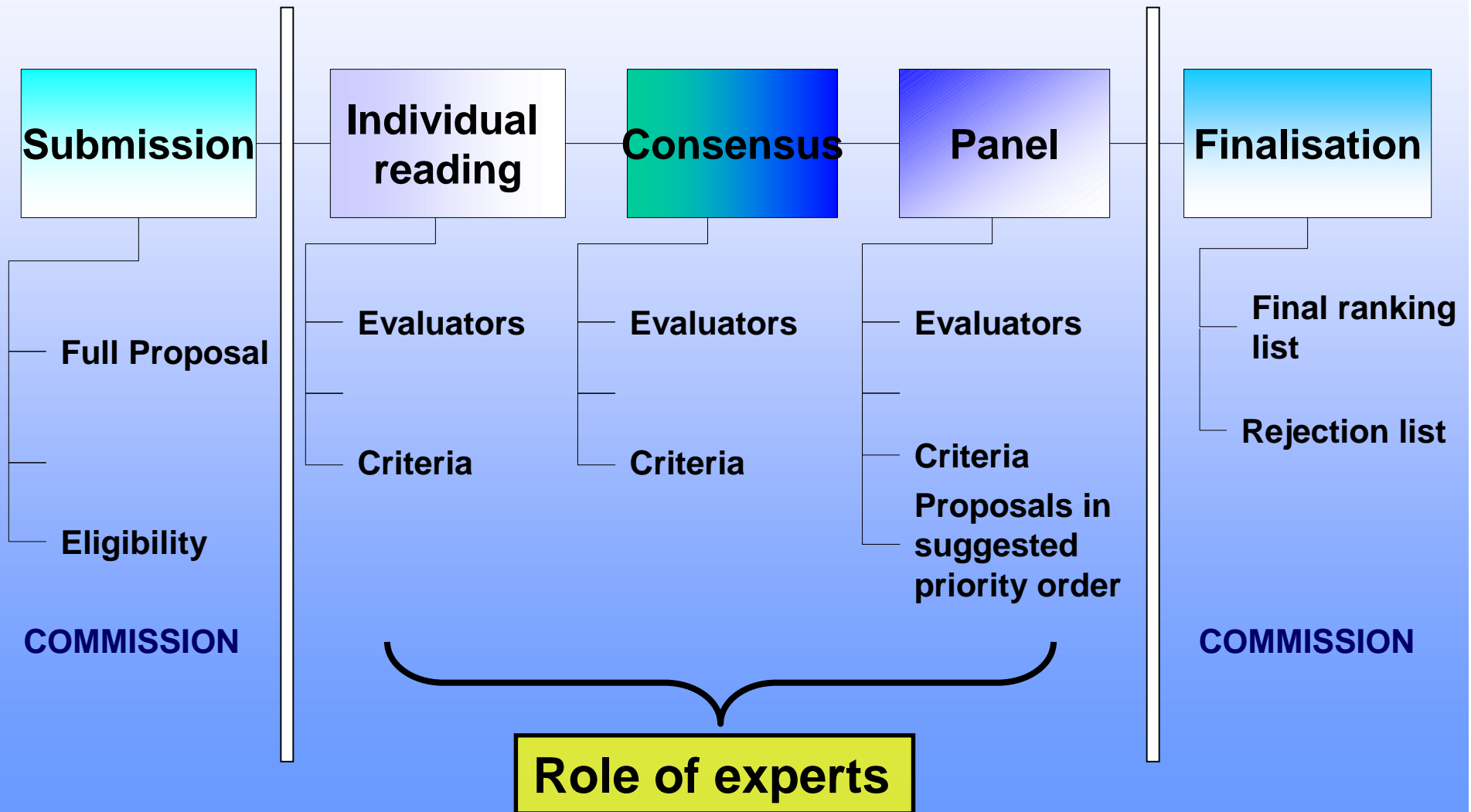
### *Independent observers*

- Provides assurance that the process is fair
  - **And can provide constructive advice**
  - **Not normally an expert in the scientific domain concerned**
- Their reports are made available to Programme Committee
- *IOs are convened annually to “compare notes”*

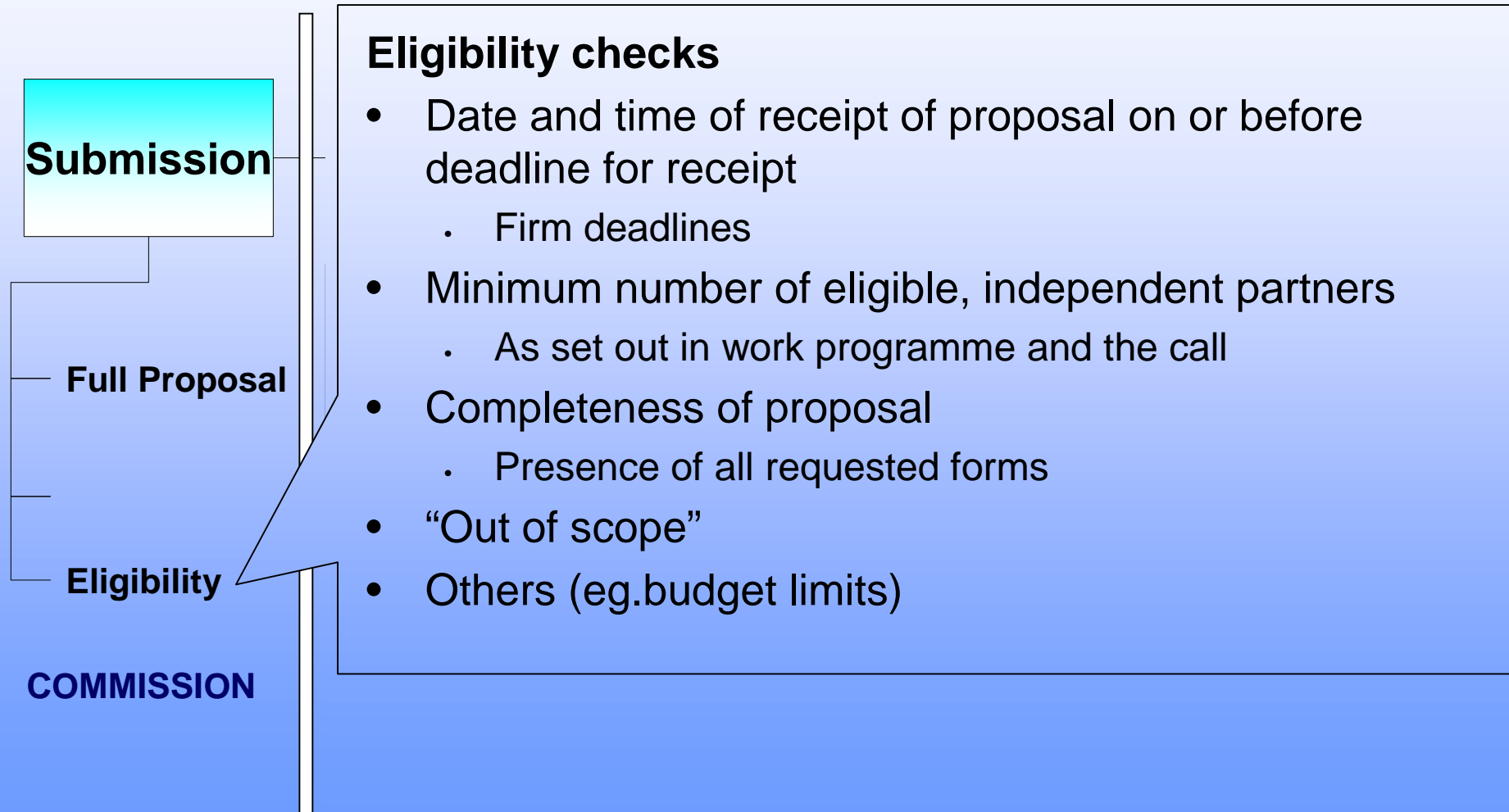
# Inhalt

- Hintergrundinformation
- **Organisation und Ablauf im Überblick**
- Im Detail
  - *Individual Reading*
  - *Consensus*
  - *Pannel*
- Feedback von Evaluatoren
- Eigene Erfahrungen

# Organisation der Evaluation



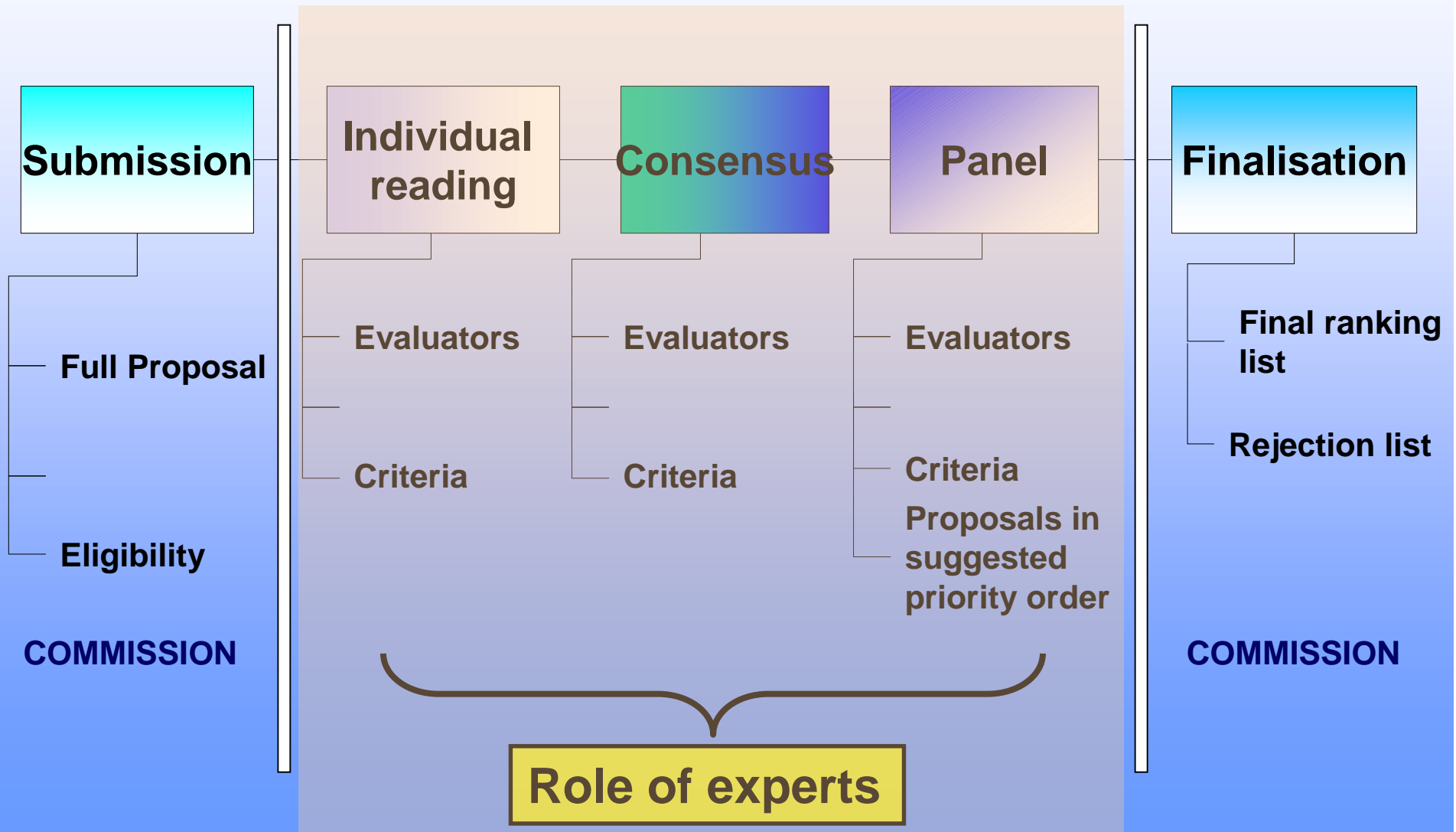
# Organisation der Evaluation



# Inhalt

- Hintergrundinformation
- Organisation und Ablauf im Überblick
- **Im Detail**
  - *Individual Reading*
  - *Consensus*
  - *Pannel*
- Feedback von Evaluatoren
- Eigene Erfahrungen

# Evaluation im Detail



## **Evaluation im Detail**

### ***Individual reading***

The evaluators first carry out individual readings  
(May be done remotely)

The experts:

- **Evaluate the proposal individually**
  - without discussing with the other evaluators
  - 50-100 pages, tentatively 2 hours per proposal
- **Check whether the proposal is ‘in scope’**
- **Complete an Individual Evaluation Report (IER) form giving scores and comments on all criteria**
- **Sign and date the form**
  - Scores should be in line with comments

## Evaluation im Detail

### *The criteria*

- Three main criteria:
  - **S&T Quality** (relevant to the topic of the call)
    - *Concept, objective, work-plan*
  - **Implementation**
    - *Individual participants and consortium as a whole*
    - *Allocation of resources*
  - **Impact**
    - *Contribution to expected impacts listed in work programme*
    - *Plans for dissemination/exploitation*
- Criteria adapted to each funding scheme and each thematic area
  - specified in the work programme

## Evaluation im Detail

### *Proposal scoring*

- Each criterion is scored 0-5
  - **half-scores allowed**
  - **whole range should be considered**
  - **Scores must pass *thresholds* if a proposal is to be considered for funding**
- Thresholds apply to individual criteria...
  - **Default threshold is 3**
- ...and to the total score
  - **higher than the sum of the individual thresholds**
  - **Default threshold is 10**
- Can vary from call-to-call!

## Evaluation im Detail

### *Interpretation of the scores*

- **0:** *The proposal fails to address the criterion under examination or cannot be judged due to missing or incomplete information*
- **1:** *Very poor. The criterion is addressed in a cursory and unsatisfactory manner.*
- **2:** *Poor. There are serious inherent weaknesses in relation to the criterion in question.*
- **3:** *Fair. While the proposal broadly addresses the criterion, there are significant weaknesses that would need correcting.*
- **4:** *Good. The proposal addresses the criterion well, although certain improvements are possible.*
- **5:** *Excellent. The proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion in question. Any shortcomings are minor.*

# Evaluation im Detail

## Beispiel

### Mittleres Proposal

- S&T Quality 3
  - Implementation 3
  - Impact 3
  - Summe 9
- < Threshold **10**

### Sehr gutes Proposal

- S&T Quality 4,5
  - Implementation 4
  - Impact 5
  - Summe 13,5
- Threshold  
(kein Problem) **10**

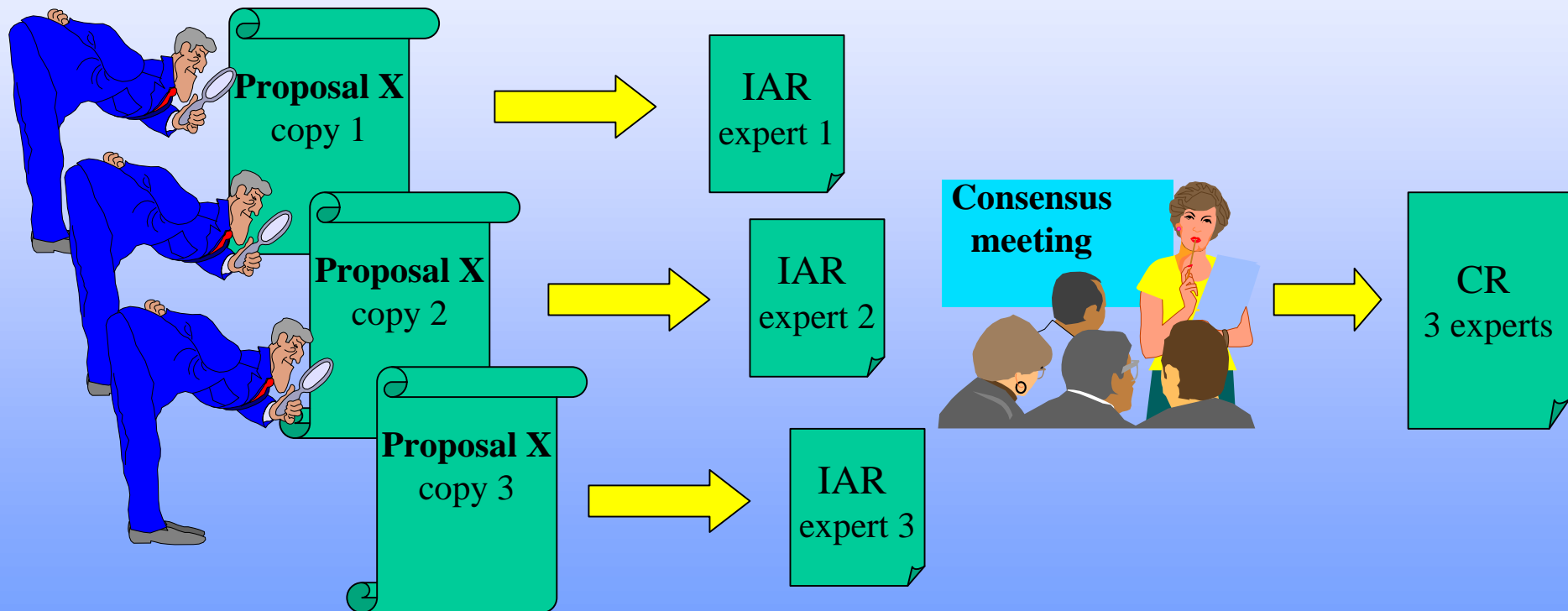
### Schwieriges Proposal

- S&T Quality 5
  - Implementation **2,5**
  - Impact 4,5
  - Summe 12
- < Threshold

# Evaluation im Detail

*For each proposal:*

May be "remote"



*Note: There may be more than 3 evaluators*  
IAR=Individual assessment report  
CR=Consensus Report

## Evaluation im Detail

### *Consensus Meeting*

- Built on the basis of the individual assessments of all the evaluators
- Usually involves a discussion
- Moderated by a commission staff-member
- Agreement on consensus scores and comments for each of the criteria
- One expert acts as *rapporteur*

## Evaluation im Detail

### *Consensus group and the Moderator*

- Scoring is not a simple averaging process
  - **'Outlying' individual scores need to be explored**
- The Commission moderator "chairs" the discussion
  - **provides information if necessary**
  - **does not contribute opinions**
- Impartiality and informed neutrality
  - **But not passive !**
  - **Good Approach: start with a discussion on the comments, not the scores**
- Moderator reviews the quality of the Consensus Report
  - **which forms the basis of the Evaluation Summary Report**

## **Evaluation im Detail**

### ***Failure to reach a Consensus***

- **Start the Consensus Meeting with the assumption that an agreement will be reached.**
  - This should take no more than an hour (usually less, but also more)
- **If deadlocked, an additional evaluators (max 3) will be invited to read the proposal**
- **A minority viewpoint can be recorded alongside the majority position**

## Evaluation im Detail

### *Consensus report – key points*

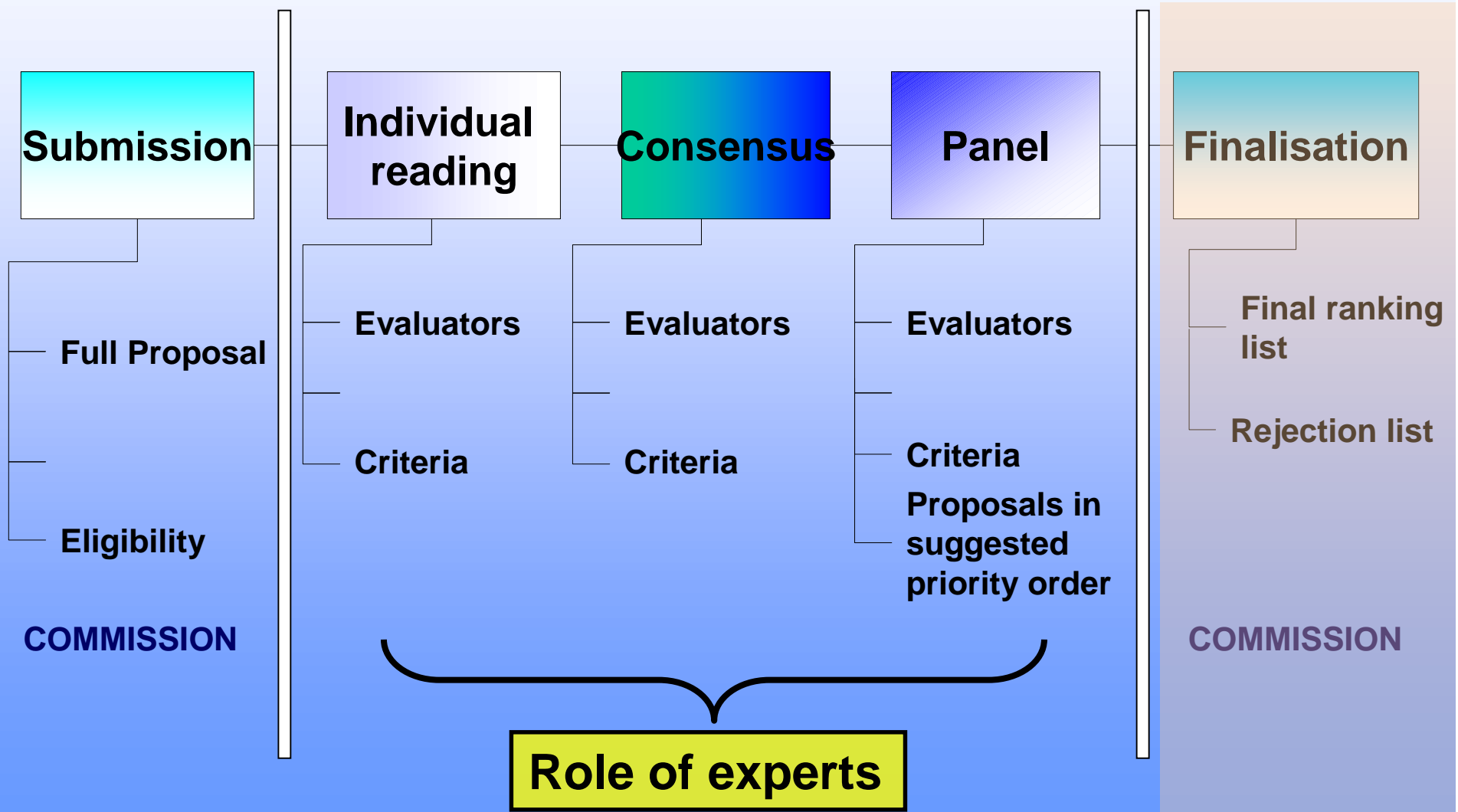
- The *rapporteur* is responsible for drafting the consensus report (CR)
    - è **Includes consensus marks and comments**
  - ∅ The quality of the CR is paramount
    - **It is not often changed at the panel stage**
  - ∅ The aim is:
    - ∅ **a clear assessment of the proposal, with justification**
    - ∅ **Clear feedback on weaknesses & strengths**
  - ∅ To be avoided:
    - ∅ **comments that don't correspond with the scores**
    - ∅ **recommendations in view of resubmission**
- è *Approach: Implementation of quality control and proof reading*

## Evaluation im Detail

### *The final Panel*

- Key function is to ensure consistency
- Final marks and comments for each proposal
  - **Evaluation Summary Reports (ESR)**
    - **Based on the consensus report**
    - **Any new scores (if necessary) ... should be carefully justified**
    - **Clear guidance for contract negotiation**
- Observe proposals with identical consensus scores
  - **Prioritise certain criteria?**
  - **Consider overall balance?**
  - **Budget?**
- [*Exceptionally*] recommendations for combining
- List of proposals for priority order
- Hearings (if applicable)

# Evaluation im Detail



## Evaluation im Detail

### *“Initial information” to applicants - Sending of ESR*

- The Commission doesn't change the ESR, except if necessary to:
  - **Improve readability**
  - ***[Exceptionally]* To remove factual errors or inappropriate comments that may have escaped earlier proof-reading**
- The scores are never changed
- The ESR is sent to the proposal coordinator – no commitment at this stage regarding funding
- This is the public face of the evaluation!

## Evaluation im Detail

### *Ethical Review*



- Triggered by the experts or the Commission
- The Ethical Review will be carried out on the proposal submitted
  - **No additional information will be requested**
- **The Ethical Review Panel discusses :**
  - à The awareness of the ethical aspects and the **social impact** of the research they propose
  - à Respect for the **FP7 ethical standards**
  - à Application of relevant **European Directives, conventions etc**
  - à Whether the consortium is seeking the **approval of relevant local ethics committees**
  - à The **balance between the research objectives and the means** the applicants intend to use

# Inhalt

- Hintergrundinformation
- Organisation und Ablauf im Überblick
- Im Detail
  - *Individual Reading*
  - *Consensus*
  - *Pannel*
- **Feedback von Evaluatoren**
- Eigene Erfahrungen

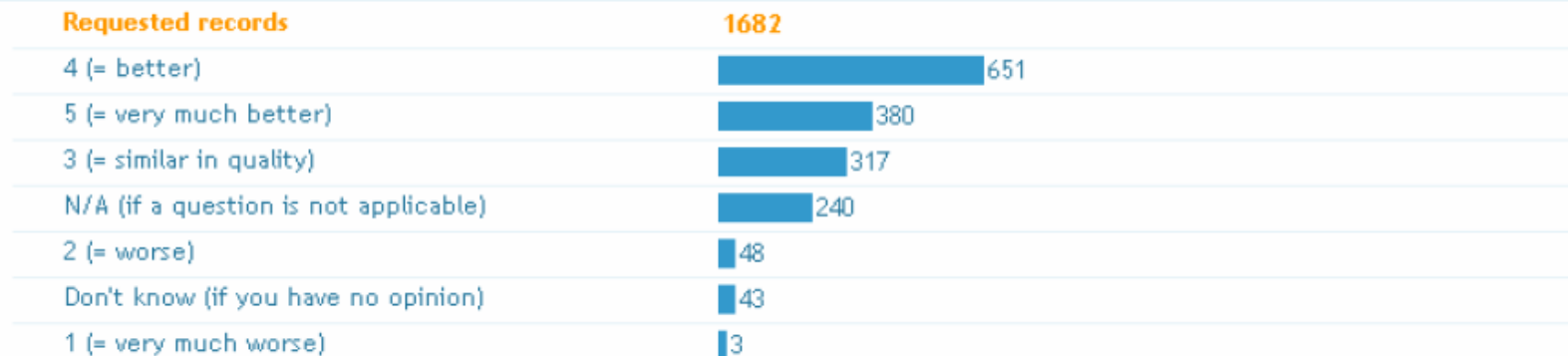
# Feedback von Evaluatoren

## Survey among evaluators (Oct. 2007 – Nov. 2008)

How would you rate the quality of the evaluation overall? -single choice reply- (compulsory)



If you have evaluated research proposals before for national or international research funding schemes, how do you rate the overall quality of the EU process in comparison? -single choice reply- (compulsory)



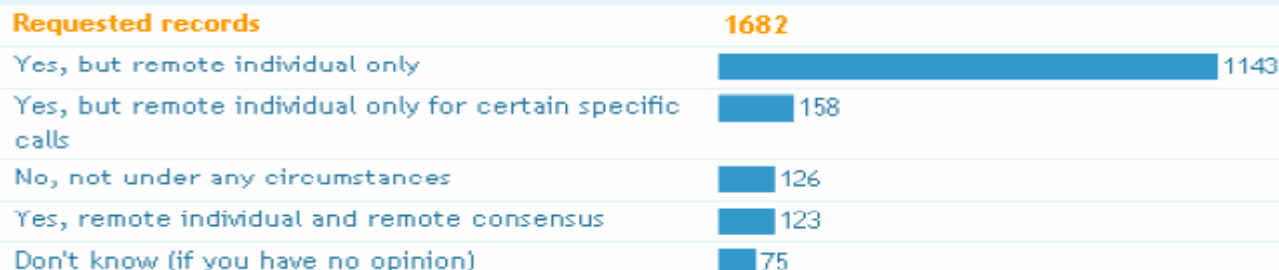
*"I serve as an expert for many international evaluations (in US and Europe). My personal opinion is that the EC evaluations are fair and well done"*

*"In comparison with other evaluation processes in which I have been involved (both national and international) this one was outstanding and I think fully guarantees both impartiality and a high quality evaluation"*

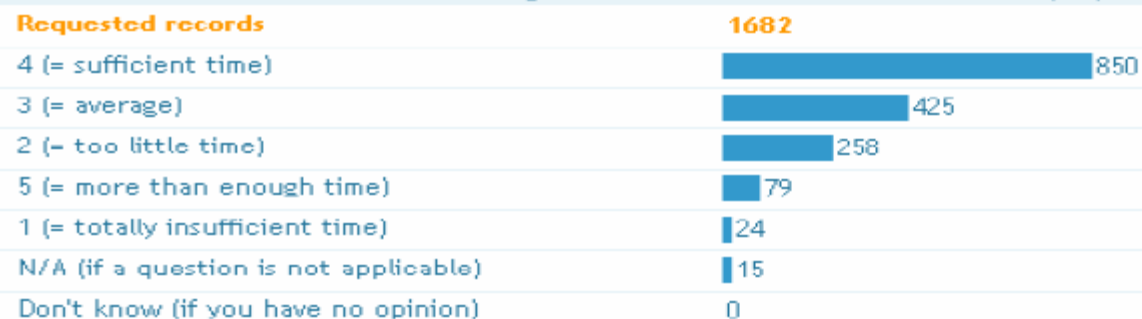
# Feedback von Evaluatoren

## Survey among evaluators (Oct. 2007 – Nov. 2008)

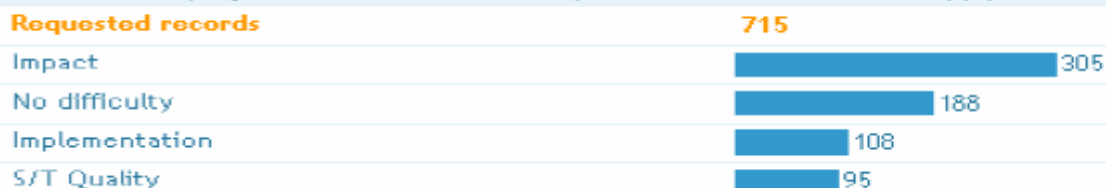
Do you prefer remote evaluation? -single choice reply- (optional)



Did you have sufficient time for the reading and the individual evaluation of the proposals? -single choice reply- (optional)



Collaborative projects: which criteria did you find most difficult to apply? -single choice reply- (optional)



# Inhalt

- Hintergrundinformation
- Organisation und Ablauf im Überblick
- Im Detail
  - *Individual Reading*
  - *Consensus*
  - *Pannel*
- Feedback von Evaluatoren
- **Eigene Erfahrungen**

## Eigene Erfahrungen

- Evaluationsverfahren ist so fair es sein kann
- Keine Einflussnahme der Project Officers
- Professionelle Proposal Schreiber sind im Vormarsch
  - Erzeugen auf den ersten Blick gute Proposals auch für „heiße Luft“
- Consensus Meetings sind wichtiges Instrument
  - Z.B. Kombination aus Technik und Anwendung
  - i.d.R. Einigung auf eine Wertung
- Mögliche Probleme
  - Kalibrierung: Was ist innovativ?
    - „Killer“ vs. „alles toll Finder“
  - Unterscheid zwischen Kommentare und Empfehlungen
  - Aufpassen, dass der Evaluator nicht das Proposal verbessern will

## Eigene Erfahrungen - Tipps für Antragsteller

- Den Antrag am Ende von EINER Person überarbeiten (Stimmigkeit; „aus einem Guss“) lassen
- keine Widersprüche im Antrag
- „Claim“ herausstellen (was will man machen)
- Biographien verkürzen
- Balancierte Konsortienzusammensetzung (Zusammenspiel)
- Kontakt zur Kommission herstellen (Networking)
- Arbeitsprogrammziele, Ausschreibungstexte und Evaluierungskriterien lesen
- Bewertungskriterien kennen und erfüllen, gerade formale Kriterien
  - Gute Anträge liefern dem Evaluator die Antworten auf die Fragen
  - è Finales Lesen und Verbessern aus Sicht eines Evaluators
- Alle drei Kriterien betrachten:
  - Gute Anträge scheitern teilweise am Management oder Impact.
  - Bei Management ist of Copy-Past sichtbar.
- Anträge sollten kurz, knapp, fundiert und grafisch (Diagramme) veranschaulicht werden (aber nicht überladen)

## EU-Anträge an FHs ?

- Wichtiges Förderinstrument
  - Innovative Forschung
  - Internationale Kooperation
  - Nicht trivial
- Herausforderungen
  - Fachlich: Konkurrenz auf sehr hohem Niveau
    - è Kooperation unerlässlich
      - Interne Beratung und Peer Review
  - Administrativer Aufwand bei Anträgen und Projekten
    - Support von zentraler Stelle unerlässlich

**Vielen Dank für die Aufmerksamkeit!**